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Atari Online News, Etc.
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A-ONE #1844 11/18/16

~ Fool Me Once, Facebook ~ People Are Talking! ~ New ARAnyM Minipack!
~ Comparing 030 Machines ~ Call of Cuty Refunds! ~ Wi-Fi Shadows Issues!
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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

As part of the country is finally coming to grips over the fact that Donald Trump will be our next president, Trump is busy trying to put together his new Cabinet. While we probably won’t agree with all of his choices (big surprise there!), it’s a ritual that occurs every four years after an election.

I’m still amazed at the level of protests still going on that pertain to the election results. Fervent Sanders supporters are bitter over the results, why? Your candidate wasn’t on the ballot, he lost the primary! Get over it! He backed Hillary, and she lost! Get over it! You didn’t vote because Sanders wasn’t on the ballot! Your vote was your means of protest, so get over it! On the other side of the coin, you do have a right to your opinion and the right to protest. Do it peacefully. In the end, it won’t matter; there are potentially more effective ways to make your opinions and issues heard.

Meanwhile, I’m going to continue to follow the progress of the Trump transition to the White House. It’s guaranteed to be as interesting as the trip getting there!

Until next time...

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ARAnyM MiniPack

Hi,

ARAnyM <http://aranym.org/> is the GNU/GPL ATARI Virtual Machine from which a minimal configuration, the *miniPack* is distributed <http://eureka.atari.org/miniPack.zip> miniPack is modified with the new release of EmuTOS v.0.9.7. It supports :

‘Run_win‘ allows launching on PC with Windows
‘MacAranym‘ allows launching on PPC Macintosh with OS X
‘MacAranym JIT‘ allows launching on IntelMac with OS X
‘run_x86.sh‘ allows launching on PC with x86-Linux
‘run_ppc.sh‘ allows launching on Mac _and_ PS3 with PPC-Linux

So Macintosh-PC-PlayStation3 are all supported with Windows,
OS X and GNU/Linux.

This simple ARAnyM configuration is running on any machine.
Here is a screenshot <http://eureka.atari.org/aranym.gif>

Enjoy, it’s yours =)

--
François LE COAT
Author of Eureka 2.12 (2D Graph Describer, 3D Modeller)
<http://eureka.atari.org/>

EmuTOS 0.9.7

The EmuTOS developers are please to announce the release of
EmuTOS 0.9.7. In case you didn’t know, EmuTOS is a
GEMDOS-compatible operating system for Atari computers and is a
free and open source replacement for common TOS images for Atari
emulators.

The main new features of EmuTOS 0.9.7 are:
- BIOS: add support for extended MBR partitions
- BIOS: add support for MonSTer board
- BIOS: configure & size ST-RAM on TT
- BIOS: add support for Eiffel on CAN bus on ColdFire EVB
- BIOS: add _5MS cookie to support FreeMiNT on non-Atari hardware
- BIOS: add support for Apollo Core 68080
- BDOS: set archive flag when file is created/modified
- EmuDesk: allow disk delete via desktop File menu item
- EmuDesk: implement desktop ’Install devices’
- EmuDesk: implement desktop ’Install icon’
- EmuDesk: implement desktop ’Remove desktop icon’
- EmuDesk: rewrite ’Install application’
- EmuCON2: provide a standalone version of EmuCON2

You can download your preferred binary archive here:
http://sourceforge.net/projects/emutos/files/emutos/0.9.7/

Amiga 3000, Atari TT030 and Macintosh IIci 030 68030 Computers Compared!

By M. Bergseth

The 80 s was over. 1989-1990 was alive, and so was 68030 monster
machines era alive. Here we compare Amiga 3000, Atari TT030 and
Macintosh IIci 030 computers. The Mac is from 1989, but it got
same specs as the Amiga and Atari, however even if it was
released one year before the price of it was huge. The 68030 CPU
line from Motorola was used in several machines, but here we
compare these 3 as they are all SCSI based computers. They also
have quite similar specs, but at the same time others are not and
because of this differ a lot and a wonder how Commodore and Atari

could screw things up so badly!? They ve could both have been strong names today, if they did the right moves in 1990 for sure. Here we look at these monsters, but important computers that actually changed the computer industry a lot.

Atari TT030 and Amiga 3000 also tried to introduce UNIX to the people. Atari promised UNIX to be released at launch, but it took 2 years before it was actually released. Commodore launched Amiga 3000UX with Amix (Commodore UNIX). These giants sure made impact for sure and because of their price and functionality should have been much more loved back in the days. The Mac also had UNIX possibility since 1989, but because of the price you had to pay for the machine it wasn t a affordable like A3000 or Atari TT030.

It is a bit unfair to compare these regarding the price, as 68030 CPU s became cheaper later. But the price of $8798 on Macintosh IIci is just insane high. Amiga 3000 was launched at a price of $3379 which was also was quite stiff, but much more affordable by less riches bussines people. The Atari TT030 landed at $2995 which made it the cheapest one.

How Apple could survive with serving the public such expensive machine is beyond my understanding. The specs of the machine was quite high for the time, but the Amiga 3000 was miles ahead of it and especially the sound quality of Paula 8-bit custom chipset was still miles ahead of the competitors. The Atari TT030 desktop computer was on the other hand a bit cheaper when launched. However the specs of it said that the machine had 16 MegaByte of RAM as standard, which should have wiped out the competition if only AtariTOS (and the promised UNIX OS) were updated fully. What were Atari thinking??? There are some words about that Atari had issues with Atari TT030 at first;

The Atari TT030 was Atari s crown jewel of computer systems up until the Atari Falcon030 became available 2 years later. However its a toss up between the two systems as to which one is better. Originally the Atari TT030 was to come with a MC68030 at 32Mhz and the units initial run was done with those processors and that speed. However problems plagued the initial run and 32mhz processors were swapped out and 16mhz version were put in there place. The later run of TT030 s did have issues resolved and were sold in the 32Mhz version.

The time in 1990 was a bloody race at the Motorola side of CPU s. Both Commodore and Apple managed to launch cheaper 68030 and 68040 machines later on, but in 1990 all 3 companies actually competed themself to a death sort of. Apple just survived because of their brilliant iPod launch later. Commodore even managed to release a 68030 version of Amiga 4000 that was way cheaper than the 68040 version. Still Commodore went down. Atari finished the Atari TT development totally in 1993 and so their desktop computer era was over. Atari Falcon030 lasted a bit more, but its rather seen as a Amiga 1200 competitor.

Vital information about these 68030 monster machines from 1989-1990

	Amiga 3000	Atari TT030	Macintosh IIci
PRICE	$3379	$2995	$8798
YEAR	1990	1990	1989

OS	AmigaOS 2.04(32-bit)	Atari TOS 3.0x (16-bit)	MacOS 6.0.4 (16-bit)
CPU	68030 25MHz	68030 32MHz	68030 25MHz
CPU MAX	68060 50MHz/PowerPC 604e 233MHz	68030 32MHz	68040 25MHz / PowerPC 601 100MHz
GFX	ECS	TT	Dedicated
COLOURS	4096 (HAM mode)	16	256
MEM	2MB	16MB	4MB
HD TYPE	SCSI	SCSI	SCSI
HD SIZE	40MB, 50MB or 100MB	50MB	40MB, 80MB
SOUND	PAULA 8-bit	STe Soundchip	Built-in Audio
EXPANSION	Zorro III,ISA	TBA	NuBus, ADB,
PCI EXPANSION	Possible	No	No
FLOPPY STORAGE	1.74MB	720KB	1.44MB
UNIX	YES	YES	YES

The prices of these machines is taken from the year they were launched. Todays currency isn t taken into those numbers. Here I wanted to show the differences at the time of 1989-1990. The point of this article is to try to get a glimps of these machines that were huge competitors in 1990. With PC line on the side that just took of, it is now a bit shock to see both Atari and Commodore no longer with us. Both of these had specs at the same level of Apple s.

Mac was however very expensive at that time, but even today Mac is still as expensive. However today they have design that makes people buying their laptops and iMacs. At that time, it is clearly that Amiga 3000 was and still is looking good even today. The design that Commodore made was timeless and shows how far Commodore was at their design. Only if they didn t collapse in 1994. What if we could change the history today?

Comparing all of these 68030 beasts, Amiga 3000 is the one that is most expandable even today. Elbox is a company that have made PCI Expansion Possibilities for the machine even. Zorro III was for a long time a very nice expandable system made by Commodore. You can actually install a cheap ATI Radeon 9200 card if you want and get 3D support also etc. The Zorro III expansion possibility also gave A3000 PC Emulators, Mac Emulators, Sound cards and also Ethernet cards.

With this article I tried to view how it was in 1989-1990. Apple released way more 68k Macs later that was way cheper, but still they kept quite high price tag. You could say that Amiga 4000 030 and Macintosh LC III 030 would be rivals from 1992 etc. Atari gave up the TT line in 1993 and Commodore final machine was the Amiga 4000T.

Purpose of this article is to show the differences of these machines at a time all of these had high expectations for their future. However different decisions by different CEO s made Atari and Amiga loose it. What if everything ended in a different way? How would the world have been today?

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Microsoft Refunds Call of Duty Players!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Rebooteroids for the Atari Jaguar!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Windows 10 Store Refunds Call of Duty Player
Because Nobody’s Playing It

Every year, Activision releases another Call of Duty and gamers across the world scramble to get their hands on the new shooter. Fans love the single player campaign, but the game s polished, fun, and fast-paced multiplayer mode is the real draw.

Of course, it only works if you have other people to play with. A few gamers who bought Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare through the digital storefront built into Windows 10 have discovered they can only play with other gamers who also bought the game from Microsoft. Xbox One players can only play with other Xbox One players, and PlayStation 4 players can only play with other PlayStation 4 players. This has always been the case. The trouble is that this time not all PC players can play with other PC players. For unknown reasons, Windows 10 Store customers are segregated from customers who bought the game from Steam, which is by far the most popular platform on PC.

That s like buying a game from Target and learning you can t play with people who bought it from Best Buy. Call of Duty fans who made the unfortunate of mistake of giving Microsoft their cash are left sitting in lonely multiplayer lobbies waiting for games that ll never start.

However, it appears that Microsoft is giving out refunds.

Activision released two Call of Duties this year. Infinite Warfare is a new entry in the franchise and Modern Warfare Remastered is a fancy remake of one of the series’ most popular games players could get as an extra for buying Infinite Warfare s special edition. One Reddit user s little brother bought a copy of special edition to play Warfare Remastered through the Windows 10 Store. When he tried to play some deathmatch he learned he was one of two people looking for a game.

That s right, he couldn t find a game for one of the most popular multiplayer shooters of all time. To put that in perspective, more than 5,000 gamers are playing Modern Warfare Remastered on Steam right now.

Redditor hayz00s’ little brother never did find a match and

called up the Windows 10 Store to refund the product. It was very easy, hayz00s told me in a private Reddit message. He said they were very courteous and didn't give him any trouble trying to get the refund.

The Redditor s brother bought the game from the Windows 10 Store for two simple reasons: It was cheaper and he wanted to play with another sibling who d bought the game on Xbox One.

Microsoft has spent the past six months pushing cross platform play between PC and Xbox One. High profile titles such as Gears of War 4 and Forza Horizon 3 already support the feature, but Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare does not.

The price difference is pretty big. Steam users who want to play the remastered Modern Warfare have to drop $79.99 for Call of Duty s Legacy Edition. The Windows 10 Store has the same product for $63.99.

hayz00s said he d stick to Steam, but his brother would use the Windows 10 Store again, If it s cheaper than Steam s version and won t have separated online multiplayer.

Call of Duty does have a single player campaign, but most fans buy the games to kill other people in multiplayer. Without that, it s just not Call of Duty and it s not worth the cash. The Redditor claimed he reached out to Microsoft and scored his little brother a refund, a heroic feat in these days of draconian digital return policies.

This probably isn't Microsoft's fault. Microsoft has been pushing cross platform play between the Xbox One and Windows 10 for the past year, even promising people who buy a game on one platform will get it on the other for free.

"We support cross-play between devices and platforms for partners who want to enable it, a Microsoft spokesperson told Windows Central when it asked them about the recent Call of Duty problems. The statement implies Activision made the call to keep PC players who bought the game from different storefronts separate. Which, if true, is ridiculous.

Gamers are used to the separation of console and PC multiplayer communities. But PC players aren t used to companies gating them off based on where they purchased their game. It s a ludicrous policy that doesn t serve anyone s interest and it s another black eye for a digital storefront that PC gamers already avoid like the plague.

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Rebooteroids for the Atari Jaguar

Rebooteroids is a new take on an arcade classic for the Atari Jaguar. In development for over six years, Rebooteroids is now available for purchase! Rebooteroids features 100 unique levels, plus 10 ’kombateroids’ levels for multiplayer head to head. You can choose from five gameplay modes, including a ’skirmish mode’ whereby randomly generated levels of increasing difficulty challenge the player. Enjoy the original soundtrack by 505 and MSG/reservoir gods while you fight your way through each wave.

You pilot the EWS, a small, highly maneuverable test ship equipped with a basic rapid-fire cannon. Your test ship is also fitted with a state of the art Hyperspace Engine which, if it was working, would be capable of jumping the craft vast distances. However, due to damage, it currently only has the ability to jump short range, and without a navigation lock you have no way of knowing where you will pop back into normal space.

Use your controller to rotate the EWS left and right, thrust to avoid colliding with objects, and most importantly, fire to blast everything in sight! Collect bonus power-ups to increase your odds of survival. Every five waves (in Arcade mode) you’ll enter a bonus round, where you have the opportunity to earn an extra life. Your high scores are saved to the cart, and you can also share them online.

Rebooteroids is packed into a 4MB cartridge and includes a high-quality box and 20-page manual.

Please visit the AtariAge Store to purchase a copy today!

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

IBM Built A Copy of the Internet for Mock Cyberattacks

A simulated version of the entire Internet is now live inside an IBM data center in Massachusetts, where the company plans to hold mock cyberattacks against large corporations.

The "cyber range," located just a few blocks from MIT in Cambridge, is manned by former security experts from federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies. They can use live malware, ransomware, and other hacking tools to stage realistic cyberattacks.

IBM said in a statement that it is the first privately operated facility of its kind. It’s built around the intranet of a

fictitious corporation, with more than one petabyte of information and more than 3,000 users. IBM hopes it will better prepare its clients to recover from the type of large-scale attack that disabled much of the US Internet infrastructure for several hours last month.

"Response is such a big part of security, but it’s often a forgotten part of security," IBM Security General Manager Marc van Zadelhoff said at the facility’s unveiling Wednesday, according to BostInno. Seventy-five percent of IT and security professionals that IBM surveyed said their organizations don’t have a modern incident response plan in place.

In addition to getting critical systems back online, the response to a cyberattack typically involves notifying a company’s customers in addition to alerting government authorities. The Obama administration recently issued new rules for handling cyberattacks, complete with a color-coded "cyber incident severity schema" reminiscent of the Bush-era Homeland Security Advisory System.

IBM’s Cambridge center is the latest addition to its security division, which already has 1,400 experts in multiple data centers around the world who use the Watson artificial intelligence platform to detect attacks.

Twitter Accused of Political Bias in Right-wing Crackdown

Ariana Rowlands, a 20-year-old college student from Southern California, is half Mexican and half Welsh, a child of immigrants raised on telenovelas and burritos. She’s also a fervent conservative who regularly airs her political views on Twitter.

"So proud of my Hispanic Heritage and so proud to support @realDonaldTrump for President!!" she tweeted in September under a hashtag celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. Soon after, she began receiving personal attacks and death threats, she says.

Rowlands reported the abuse but she says Twitter did nothing. And, she says, it wasn’t the first time Twitter ignored concerns for her safety that she and her Twitter followers expressed and even reported to police.

"I want to stress that it’s not like we’re crying victim or anything like that," Rowlands said in an interview. "It’s just that we’re pointing out the double standard."

Rampant abuse on Twitter is in the spotlight coming off a bitterly divisive election season that turned the social media service into a political battleground. When it comes to policing behavior from warring sides that crosses the line, conservatives say Twitter is guilty of left-wing favoritism. The rash of recent suspensions of high-profile alt-right accounts is more evidence of that favoritism, they say.

"The commonality of these groups that are being targeted is their politics, and you don’t see it on the other side as much,"

D.C. McAllister, a columnist for conservative news service PJ Media and The Federalist, said in an interview.

"There are Twitter accounts on the left that are suspended, but it’s not en masse like it is here."

Whether Twitter has taken a more aggressive stance with some users over its harassment policies is hard to prove: Twitter gives few details, if any, when it suspends accounts, and some observers say the fault lies more in its failure to rein in abuse regardless of the political tilt.

But the perception that it has a double standard runs strong. Twitter’s suspension of alt-right leader Richard Spencer contributed to the suspicion that Twitter is arbitrarily stifling conservative speech. Spencer, who coined the term alt right in 2010, says he was tossed from Twitter for his political views he wants to segregate the United States by racial groups not for harassing Twitter users. He was suspended alongside the accounts of other white nationalists.

Conservatives say their ouster fits a pattern of liberal bias.

In July when Ghostbusters actress Leslie Jones was subjected to racist and sexist taunts led by Breitbart technology editor Milo Yiannopoulos, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey intervened and yanked Yiannopoulos from the service.

Yet, conservatives say, nothing happened to rapper Talib Kweli and his followers when they attacked black Breitbart reporter Jerome Hudson with racial slurs. When Breitbart contributor Kassy Dillon complained about a Twitter user who sent her harassing tweets and messages, Twitter made the perpetrator delete one tweet that suggested someone shoot Dillon in the head.

Twitter refused to comment directly on the allegation that it ignores abuse hurled at conservatives. "The Twitter rules prohibit violent threats, harassment, hateful conduct and multiple account abuse, and we will take action on accounts violating those policies," the company said in an emailed statement.

Long before the contentious election, Twitter was under growing pressure to cut off the gushing fire hose of hate and harassment that targeted people.

Users don’t have to reveal their real names on Twitter and that anonymity emboldens them to attack women, people of color, Muslims, gays and other groups, even threaten rape and death. The alt right, a loose-knit group that embraces white nationalism among other things, gained prominence during the presidential campaign for using social media to spread its ideology through viral memes and anonymous attacks on users from pro-Donald Trump accounts.

The Anti-Defamation League documented a dramatic rise in anti-Semitic tweets targeting journalists who covered the Republican presidential candidate. After the election, the neo-Nazi website The Daily Stormer published a list of more than 50 Twitter users who had expressed fear about the outcome of the

election, urging its readers to "punish" them with a barrage of tweets that would drive them to suicide.

"While we have taken steps over the years to try to combat abuse and harassment, we haven’t moved as quickly as we would have liked or we haven’t always done as much as we would have liked because we have tried to make sure we are not making decisions that have unintended, negative consequences and ramifications," Del Harvey, Twitter’s head of safety, recently told USA TODAY.

As a private platform, Twitter is not required to treat all users equally. Harvey says Twitter is drawing a hard line between free speech and "behavior that is intended to silence others."

But conservatives say they see public shows of support for liberals and their causes, such as gay rights and racial justice, yet Twitter turns a deaf ear when left-wing activists target them.

"When liberals complain, Jack Dorsey is on their side. He sees their point of view. He cares about their feelings," said Rowlands, who is president of the UC Irvine College Republicans, a group that had a run-in with campus administrators when it hosted an event with Yiannopoulos and then invited him back for another.

"But because I am a conservative, it seems like Twitter doesn’t actually care," she said. "They selectively choose when they want to follow their own rules."

Twitter isn’t alone in facing allegations of political bias from the right. Earlier this year, Facebook was accused of intentionally suppressing conservative news from appearing on Trending Topics, its listing of the most popular news stories on Facebook. Facebook denied the charge.

James Grimmelmann, a Cornell law professor who studies social networks, says he does not believe Twitter’s lapses are politically motivated. Complaints are just as common on the left as they are on the right, he said.

"Twitter is terrible at listening to anybody about harassment," he said. "The rare exceptions are those who organize media campaigns and get enough attention to catch Jack’s ear. That is a very small number of people compared with the amount of harassment that gets reported to Twitter."

In the tense aftermath of the election, Twitter may be even less effective at cracking down on abusive behavior anywhere on the political spectrum, said Syracuse University communications professor Jennifer Grygiel, who studies social media.

"Everyone is blowing up their phones," Grygiel said. "The Twitter moderation queue must be off the hook."

McAllister sees it differently. She believes Twitter moderators are demonstrating their political bias when deciding which complaints to take seriously. She also says conservatives are less likely than what she labels "social justice warriors" on the left to complain about abuse. If Twitter was simply "incompetent," she said, suspensions and other penalties would be "a lot more

random."

"They are a private company and they can do what they want," she said. But, "people have their biases and it comes through in their work."

"We are always telling people to check their privilege. They need to check their biases," McAllister said. "What we are asking from Twitter is fairness."

Google Takes Aim at Fake-News Sites

Alphabet Inc. s Google plans to ban fake-news websites from using its ad-selling software, a sign that technology companies are moving to address a growing controversy about misinformation on the internet.

Google said Monday it plans to prevent Google ads from being placed on pages that misrepresent, misstate, or conceal information about the publisher, the publisher s content, or the primary purpose of the website. The policy would cover sites that distribute false news, a Google spokeswoman said.

False news stories, particularly those that spread widely on Facebook Inc. s social network, became an issue during the recent presidential election. Google experienced its own mishap on Sunday when a story on a right-wing blog erroneously stating Donald Trump won the popular vote appeared atop some Google search results.

Some media commentators have urged tech companies to try to prevent the spread of such misinformation.

Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg on Saturday tried to play down the prevalence of fake news on the social network. In a lengthy post, he said fake news accounts for less than 1% of global content on Facebook and didn’t affect the outcome of the election; he said there are false stories with both conservative and liberal leanings.

At the same time, Mr. Zuckerberg said Facebook is developing tools to help reduce fake news on the site, including one that would allow users to flag news that they believe is fake. However, Mr. Zuckerberg warned that the tool could be misused if people flag content that reflect opinions they disagree with.

Google largely had avoided such controversy, in part because it lacks a popular social-media site where stories are shared among users. Moreover, Google s search algorithm favors webpages that are well-designed and are linked to by other established sites, which tends to disfavor fake news.

But Google s AdSense program, which helps website operators place ads on their sites, is the most popular tool for monetizing websites and helps fund many fake-news sites. Google has long blocked ads that misrepresent what they market, and blocks AdSense from sites that promote hate speech or include pornography or violent content.

Google s move will crimp revenue at many fake-news sites, but it likely won t obliterate the small industry of misinformation in some corners of the internet. Others offer similar ad-selling services, though they may not be as lucrative for publishers as AdSense.

On Sunday, Google was pulled into the debate concerning fake news on the web when a blog post on 70news.wordpress.com highlighting incorrect election results appeared atop some Google search results. In fact, Hillary Clinton leads Mr. Trump by nearly 700,000 votes, according to Google s own election data, though Mr. Trump was elected president by amassing a majority in the Electoral College.

The goal of Search is to provide the most relevant and useful results for our users, a Google spokeswoman said via email. In this case we clearly didn t get it right, but we are continually working to improve our algorithms.

The 70news.wordpress site said its source for the popular-vote count was a tweet by another person. Efforts to reach the website s operator were unsuccessful.

The little-known blog s prominent position in some search results appeared to be a rare occurrence. An analysis by data journalists at the University of Maryland showed that the vast majority of news stories included in the In the news box in Google search results come from established news organizations.

CNN and the New York Times together accounted for about 44% of the links in those boxes for searches of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump between May 31 and July 9, according to the analysis, which examined 5,604 links. In just four cases, the analysis found stories from fringe-news sites Breitbart News and InfoWars.

On Monday, after several news organizations wrote about the 70news link in Google search results, such queries began showing a so-called info box from Google on election data atop the results. The link to 70news also was displaced by established news sites reporting on the earlier link.

Wi-Fi Shadows Cast by Your Fingers Could Leak Your Password

Researchers in a team from Shanghai, Boston and Tampa recently published an temptingly titled paper about password stealing.

Dubbed When CSI Meets Public Wi-Fi: Inferring Your Mobile Phone Password via Wi-Fi Signals, the paper makes you think of Crime Scene Investigation, but that s just a handy collision of acronyms.

This CSI is short for channel state information, a collection of readings that describes what s happening at the lowest level of the data link between a Wi-Fi sender, such as your laptop, and a receiver, such as as an access point.

If you remember the cassette tapes on which early home computer programs were stored, you ll know that there wasn t much CSI going on: there were typically two sound frequencies, 1200Hz and 2400Hz, and the pitch of the recording warbled between them every few milliseconds to denote zeros and ones.

In modern Wi-Fi standards, however, connections are much more complex, with each radio channel divided into many sub-channels that transmit in parallel, and multiple antennas that measure different signal paths, thus turning echoes and reflections into an advantage, not a liability.

Chopping your radio spectrum into lots of sub-channels is a bit like sending 20 bicycle couriers across town at the same time, each carrying a modest amount of correspondence, instead of stuffing the whole lot in a van and delivering it in one go.

When you have numerous independent delivery channnels, your throughput copes much better with localised interference, because you haven t got all your communication eggs in one basket.

Now imagine that you have a stream of real-time information about how what route each courier is taking, and how much progress each of them has made so far.

You can build up a picture of what the traffic looks like in various parts of the city, and you can guess at what s causing the various holdups.

After all, protesters converging on parliament cause a different pattern of disruption than a pile-up on the airport access road.

That s the kind of approach that the researchers tried in this paper.

They used specially modified firmware dowloaded into a Wi-Fi network card to create an access point that could keep track of minute variations in the underlying communication signal and correlate those changes with your typing.

They dubbed their attack WindTalker.

Their idea was that if they could get their rogue access point close enough to your phone, then the interference caused even by your fingers moving in front of the on-screen keyboard might produce detectable differences in the CSI data that they measured.

And if they could guess when you were about to start entering a PIN using just 10 widely spaced positions on the screen, rather than when you were busy with the more complicated business of navigating through a web form or typing words from the entire keyboard

 then they could focus their attention on the moments when they had the best chance of success.
Limitations of the attack

The paper is mathematically rather technical: it helps if you are

already familiar with techniques such as discrete wavelet transforms, dynamic time warping and machine learning.

But the bottom line, in brief, is that the researchers claim modest success in guessing PINs tapped in on mobile phones, based on Wi-Fi interference caused by the fingers doing the tapping.

Fortunately, the current version of the attack seems to have many limitations:

- The attack only works with one model of Wi-Fi network card, which limits the range of Wi-Fi devices that can be modified for malicious purposes.
- The attack relies on modified firmware code that is prone to crashing, which limits its usefulness.
- The attack only works on unencrypted networks, because the authors haven t yet managed to squeeze both the CSI-grabbing code and Wi-Fi decryption code into the limited firmware space available.
- The tests were done in what looks like a rather sterile radio environment, without the levels of interference you might expect in real life.
- The attack relies on a consistent stream of network replies from your phone (800 ping replies per second) to form the basis of the CSI measurements, a rate that we found hard to maintain when we tried in an office environment.
- The attack doesn t yet seem to scale from PIN entry to full-on passwords, so it isn t applicable to all login pages you may use.
- The attack is thwarted by two-factor authentication (2FA), because it relies on guessing a password that can be re-used indefinitely.

What to do?

You can probably guess our advice in this case.

Use 2FA whenever you can, and you will be taking a big step towards a digital lifetstyle in which you greatly reduce the risk of sniffed and stolen passwords.

If the crooks can t figure out what tomorrow s login code is going to be, there s no longer much point in stealing today s.

Fool Me Once, Facebook

This past September Facebook realized it had been making an error in the way it calculated one of the video metrics on its dashboard the average duration of video viewed.

It apologized.

Now it is reporting that it has uncovered other bugs that are skewing its ad metrics.

On one of its Page Insights dashboards, one summary number showing seven-day or 28-day organic page reach was miscalculated as a

simple sum of daily reach instead of de-duplicating repeat visitors over those periods. Going forward, the de-duplicated seven-day summary in the overview dashboard will be 33% lower on average and 28-day will be 55% lower.

And ..In the Facebook Analytics for Apps dashboard, one metric called Referrals is miscalculated. This metric evaluates all posts produced by people via an app or website. Facebook wrote in its blog post that:
Recommended by Forbes

    We meant to count clicks that went directly to an app or website; however, we ve also counted other clicks on those posts via the app or website, including clicks to view photos or video. We are working to fix this.

There is more:

    Out of the referrals we currently report, on average about 30% are actually clicks to consume content on Facebook. For power users of this metric (top apps that look at this data in the dashboard most frequently), we found that referrals have been overstated by approximately 6% on average. Other measurements of referrals, such as those appearing in Facebook s ads reporting tools, are unaffected.

Also Facebook has made an improvement to Page organic reach   a stricter definition   that will translate into the reported reach being 20% lower on average.

As for that previous error, Facebook is updating how it reads the video length to address this issue.

Facebook has apologized, again.

To boot, this time it has announced a number of internal controls to prevent future miscalculations including giving third-party auditors like ComScore, Nielsen and Moat more access to its data.

Now that Facebook has admitted that it has miscalculated several ad metrics, the question is, how will its legions of advertisers react?

I asked Michelle LeBlanc, a social media strategist with ad agency Industrium, if she thought companies might back away from Facebook after the first misstep with video counts was announced. Her answer: not if they understand what Facebook represents. Specifically she told me:

    I honestly think that most people who truly understand the value and impact of social media weren t really relying on this metric in the first place. Sure, video view metrics from within Facebook can be useful to get a quick glimpse of how a campaign is being received, but when my team creates a paid social strategy for a client we always want to tie it back to overall business goals   are we getting people back to their website in some way, or driving job applications, walk in traffic or sales? If you can t measure those bigger business goals in some way and tie them back to your advertising budget, then you need to take a better look at your strategy, both in the content you re producing

and the actions you are looking for your audience to complete.

What it comes down to, she said, is how a company views the real value of any business expense, not just an ad buy on Facebook. Consider the investment in new signage or a coat of fresh pain.

Businesses frequently take on those expenses without being able to measure it down to the penny. If your video content is really connecting with your audience you will be able to see the return, just as you can see the value of that fresh coat of paint, and you won t have to rely on a spreadsheet to show it to you.

Or here s another way to look at it: Facebook has become so ubiquitous that its reach is probably wider than initially realized. For example, those crazy political rants your cousin posts that you finally are forced to block do indeed have some influence, somewhere with someone.

A recent Pew Research survey found that social media can indeed cause some users, 20% in fact, to rethink their views on an issue and 17% say social media has helped to change their views about a specific political candidate.

Of course some of that content came from fake news sites, an issue that can come to the forefront following the U.S. presidential election. Pew noted that:

Respondents who indicated they had changed their minds about Clinton were more than three times as likely to say that their opinion changed in a negative direction rather than a positive one (24% vs. 7%), and respondents who mentioned Trump were nearly five times as likely to say that their opinion became more negative as opposed to more positive (19% vs. 4%).

But let s leave aside the fake news site, as awful as their existence is.

Social media has broken through that final frontier it has the ability to change people s minds about politics and similarly hot topics like gun control and gun rights, gay rights and immigration.

Think about it: a post on social media can influence someone on gun control, one of the most contentious issues of the day. A miscalculated referrals metric is hardly worth a second glance.

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